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MANPOWER RESOURCES
In The Columbus, Georgia, Area

Prepared for the
Columbus Chamber of Commerce
Columbus, Georgia

by
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Engineering Experiment Station
Georgia Institute of Technology
Atlanta, Georgia

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Research Scientist

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INTRODUCTION

The manpower resources of a community are too often taken for granted. While respectful acknowledgment is usually given to the often-repeated expression that "Manpower is a community's most valuable resource," seldom is a maximum effort made to define the potentials of this resource and to plan for its most effective use. This deficiency results in part, at least, from the failure to give full consideration to all the factors affecting manpower resources. Many attempts to evaluate the significance of these resources to a community are limited by what might be classified as unilateral, generalized, and antiquated thinking.

Unilateral thinking regarding manpower resources is generally expressed in terms of how manpower can best be used for the benefit of employers. This type of thinking is exemplified by the recent statement of a Columbus employer that the prevailing low wages and labor surplus in the area constitute a healthy manpower situation insofar as management is concerned for two principal reasons: (1) Workers are satisfied to remain stable with a minimum of labor turnover and absenteeism because of the lack of diversified employment opportunities in the area; and (2) workers have generally found it necessary to conform to work practices in the area or lose out to others who are willing and eager to obtain employment. These advantages to management are undeniable, but a broader and more valid view would include a consideration of the optimum utilization of manpower resources not only for the benefit of employers, but also for the benefit of individual workers and the community as a whole.

Generalized thinking usually results in an evaluation of manpower resources based solely on an examination of total labor supply and total job demands. This type of thinking leads to an overemphasis on the quantity of labor available and to inadequate consideration of the quality and composition of the labor supply. If manpower resources are to be used properly, the specific qualifications of present and potential employees must be matched with the specific requirements of present and future employers to determine as precisely as possible how well manpower resources meet the current and anticipated needs of the area.

Antiquated thinking in the manpower field often accompanies the type of generalized thinking mentioned above. This type of thinking seeks to

rationalize the strictly quantitative approach to manpower evaluation on the premise that if the available labor supply is large enough industry can and will take care of the problem of training workers to meet its needs. While this was generally true some years ago, the recent growth of more complex and more highly technical industries has significantly increased the requirements for pre-employment education and training. Manpower resources in an area must no longer be merely counted; communities must plan programs of action to assure that manpower resources are properly prepared to meet the specific requirements of modern industry.

This report of manpower resources in the Columbus labor market area attempts to broaden prevailing limited views by considering the development and utilization of manpower in terms of the optimum economic advancement of the area, by examining in detail the quality and composition of the labor supply, and by emphasizing the necessity for orienting the development of manpower resources toward the needs of growth industries which are suitable for the area.

Because of the critical importance and unique contribution of labor as an industrial development factor, manpower resources in Columbus were studied and are reported separately from the other economic resources and features of the area. This does not imply that the labor factor in Columbus is so critical or so unique that it should be given independent consideration in planning the overall economic growth of the area. Manpower is one of a number of interdependent factors that deserve attention, and this report, although published separately, is intended to be an integral part of the initial report on the economic assets and liabilities of the Columbus area.

SUMMARY

Manpower resources in the Columbus area provide both a significant means and a compelling reason for promoting the expansion of employment opportunities in the community. An abundant labor supply stemming from a rapidly increasing population offers industrial prospects a strong inducement to settle in the Columbus area. At the same time, the unusually high proportion of below-work-age young people in the population makes it imperative that suitable job opportunities be expanded considerably within the next few years if unemployment and out-migration are to be avoided.

The immediacy of the need for increased employment opportunities is emphasized by the fact that unemployment has been erratic in the Columbus labor market area for a number of years, and the general trend recently has been toward increased unemployment in the area. The most significant factor in this growing unemployment trend is the lack of diversification in manufacturing employment in the area. The fact that the dominant industry is declining in importance underscores the urgent need for diversification if the level of unemployment in the area is to be reduced.

Manufacturing as a source of employment has been decreasing in importance in Muscogee County. At least part of this decline can be attributed to the decreasing employment demand in the dominant textile industry, although the general pattern of decline in the relation of manufacturing employment to total employment is not unlike that of other comparable areas in Georgia. Nevertheless, the Columbus area will benefit from diversified manufacturing even if the relative importance of manufacturing as an employment source continues to decline.

The influence of the low-paying textile industry as the major employer in the Columbus area is reflected in the average wage rates in the community. In the second quarter of 1958, the average monthly wage rate of employees in insured manufacturing jobs in Muscogee County was lower than in other counties of comparable size and in the state as a whole. While the attraction of other low-paying employers to the Columbus area would contribute to the solution of the immediate unemployment problem, a perpetuation of abnormally low wage rates would deprive the community of the economic benefits which accompany an increasing per capita income.

One of Columbus' most attractive industrial development assets is the abundance of labor available in the area. With no competing large cities within an 80-mile radius, Columbus has had no difficulty in attracting what now amounts to an oversupply of labor. Even without the attraction of high-paying employment opportunities, employers in the area can draw on the labor supply available from an estimated population of more than 360,000 within commuting distance of the city.

The available nonagricultural labor supply in the Columbus area continues to grow with the entrance of surplus and marginal farm workers into the labor force. Young people entering the labor force from schools provide a continuing and increasing boost to the labor supply available in the area. Another source of labor supply is the large group of housewives and farm wives who would be willing to work in certain types of occupations.

The ratio of women employed to total employment in nonagricultural wage and salary jobs is considerably higher in the Columbus labor market area than in any other major labor market area in Georgia and in the state as a whole. This is attributable to the concentration in the area of industries that traditionally employ a relatively high percentage of female workers. It would not be wise to attempt to exploit the available female labor supply in planning the expansion and diversification of industry in the area. Female-employing industries are almost always low-paying industries, and an increase in the relative number of women employed would contribute to the general instability of the local work force.

Although the quality and composition of the available labor supply in the Columbus area are adequate for present needs, the skills and technical experience that would be required by most growth industries are in short supply. This picture is distorted somewhat by the fact that a number of workers are presently employed in positions which are below their maximum skill levels. The development of upgraded employment opportunities in the area not only would benefit these underemployed workers individually, but also would contribute to the general economic well-being of the community by making possible a more effective utilization of manpower resources.

In considering the character of the available labor supply in the Columbus labor market area, the encouraging feature is not the quality of the current work force but the potential that exists for the development of a well educated and vocationally trained work population. The educational and

training facilities in Columbus provide excellent tools for improving the quality of manpower resources in the area. Before these tools can be used most effectively, however, a plan must be established for their use. This plan should be based on a careful consideration of the types of employment opportunities that are best suited for and most likely to be attracted to the area. Educational and training programs should then be oriented toward the needs of these future employers.

The new Columbus Junior College could make a particularly valuable contribution to the quality of the future labor supply in the community by providing the opportunity for more young people to attend college locally and by supplying the demand for more semi-professional and sub-technical vocational training. If a greater proportion of high school graduates attend college, more time will be available for the community to develop expanded and diversified employment opportunities before the unusually large group of young people who are now in high school enter the labor market. If the young people of the area attend college in Columbus, they are more likely to remain in Columbus after graduation--provided, of course, that suitable employment opportunities are available locally. If they specialize in vocational courses and if these courses are properly oriented, they will be better prepared to fill the manpower needs of local employers.

In summary, the proper utilization of manpower resources in the Columbus area requires that two principal courses of action be pursued:

1. Employment opportunities in the Columbus area must be expanded, diversified and upgraded.
2. The educational and training facilities in the Columbus area must be oriented toward the needs of these expanded, diversified and upgraded employment opportunities.

MANPOWER RESOURCES IN THE COLUMBUS, GEORGIA, AREA

Population and Labor Force

Population has increased more rapidly in the Columbus labor market area than in any other major area in Georgia during the past decade. The labor force in the area has not kept pace with this accelerated population growth. In fact, a cursory review of population and labor force data suggests that the present labor force is not sufficiently large to support the estimated population. Adjustment of these data for two unique conditions that exist in the area--the largest concentration of military personnel in the state and an abnormally large group of below-work-age young people--makes possible a more realistic view of the population and labor force relationship. The adjusted data indicate a more normal labor force situation but point to a serious employment problem that is developing in the area.

The growth of population and the labor force in the Columbus labor market area (Muscogee and Chattahoochee Counties and Russell County, Alabama) is summarized in Table 1. For comparison purposes, similar data are presented for labor market areas of comparable size in Georgia. These include the Savannah area (Chatham County), the Augusta area (Richmond County and Aiken and Barnwell Counties, South Carolina), and the Macon area (Bibb and Houston Counties).

In comparison with norms, total population and total labor force data have little meaning in the Columbus area because of the distorting effect of the large group of military personnel stationed at Ft. Benning. As long as service personnel remain in the area they are considered to be fully employed and do not move in and out of the labor force. Because of these peculiar characteristics of the military population, it is necessary to reduce total population and labor force data to a civilian population and civilian labor force basis before meaningful interpretations can be made. Table 1 shows that the civilian population in the Columbus labor market area increased almost 31 per cent between 1950 and mid-1957, while the civilian labor force increased only 15.5 per cent during this period. As a result, the ratio of civilian labor force to civilian population dropped to less than 34 per cent in 1957. This ratio is considerably lower than that for the comparable labor market areas and is below the ratio normally considered necessary to support the population.

An analysis of the age composition of the civilian population clarifies somewhat this apparent discrepancy in the relation of labor force to population. A sharp rise in the birth rate during the past decade has resulted in a significant increase in the number of persons under 14 years of age in the population. This is particularly true in the Columbus area where the birth rate has been considerably higher than in any of the comparable labor market areas. It is estimated that in 1957 more than 40 per cent of the civilian population in the Columbus area was under 14, while less than 32 per cent was under 14 in 1950. This increase in the number of young people in the population accounts for the drop in the ratio of civilian labor force to total civilian population. In fact, the civilian labor force in the Columbus area actually increased at a slightly higher rate than did the 14-and-over civilian population during the 1950-57 period. In view of the large number of young people in the population, the civilian labor force in the Columbus labor market area was not abnormally low in mid-1957.

The marked shift in the age composition of the population has significant implications for the future employment situation in the Columbus labor market area. Within the next few years, the unusually large number of young people who are now in school will begin to flood the labor market. Unless suitable jobs are available for these young people, unemployment will grow and out-migration will naturally follow. To avoid these undesirable developments, immediate action must be taken to promote the creation of new job opportunities through the expansion of existing employment sources and the attraction of new employers to the area.

Employment and Unemployment

A consideration of the total civilian labor force reveals only part of the manpower picture in the Columbus area. The critical segment of the labor force is the unemployed. Men and women without jobs retard the economic activity of a community and eventually move elsewhere if employment is not available. Unemployment has been erratic in the Columbus labor market area for a number of years, and the general trend recently has been toward increased unemployment in the area. As pointed out above, the future influx of young workers threatens the area with an accelerated growth in unemployment unless job opportunities keep pace with the increasing demand for jobs.

Employment gains in the textile industry in the fall of 1958 relieved, for a time at least, the critical unemployment situation that developed in

Table 1

LABOR FORCE AND POPULATION COMPARISONS - COLUMBUS AND COMPARABLE LABOR MARKET AREAS
(1950 and 1957)

	COLUMBUS AREA			SAVANNAH AREA			AUGUSTA AREA			MACON AREA		
	1950	1957	Change	1950	1957	Change	1950	1957	Change	1950	1957	Change
<u>Labor Force--Population:</u>												
Total population	170,541	229,650	34.7%	151,481	196,450	29.7%	179,299	232,600	29.7%	135,043	172,150	27.5%
Total labor force	77,483	99,050	27.8%	61,388	80,100	30.5%	74,264	93,050	25.3%	55,762	71,650	28.5%
Total labor force to total population	45.4%	43.1%	-2.3%	40.5%	40.8%	.3%	41.4%	40.0%	-1.4%	41.3%	41.6%	.3%
<u>Military Adjustment:</u>												
Civilian population	150,368	196,800	30.9%	148,911	185,600	24.6%	172,219	220,700	28.2%	133,530	168,900	26.5%
Civilian labor force	57,320	66,200	15.5%	58,818	69,250	17.7%	67,184	81,150	20.8%	54,249	68,400	26.1%
Civilian labor force to civilian population	38.1%	33.6%	-4.5%	39.5%	37.3%	-2.2%	39.0%	36.8%	-2.2%	40.6%	40.5%	-.1%
<u>Age Adjustment:</u>												
Percentage of civilian population under 14	31.8%	40.2%	8.4%	27.8%	33.9%	6.1%	29.9%	36.4%	6.5%	28.4%	33.4%	5.0%
Civilian population 14 and over	102,582	117,600	14.6%	107,454	122,650	14.1%	120,725	140,400	16.3%	95,541	112,500	17.8%
Civilian labor force to civilian population 14 and over	55.9%	56.3%	.4%	54.7%	56.5%	1.8%	55.7%	57.8%	2.1%	56.8%	60.8%	4.0%

SOURCES:

All 1950 data - U. S. Census of Population.
 1957 population estimates (Georgia counties--Population Estimates of Georgia Counties, John L. Fulmer, Industrial Development Branch, Engineering Experiment Station, Georgia Institute of Technology.
 1957 population estimates (Alabama and South Carolina counties)--Based on estimated changes in related counties in Georgia.

1957 labor force data - The Labor Market, Employment Security Agency, Ga. Dept. of Labor (May, 1957, data from June, 1958, issues).
 1957 military population estimates--Unpublished data secured by Dr. John L. Fulmer from U. S. Department of Defense.
 1957 age adjustment data--Computed from 1950 U. S. Census of Population, Vital Statistics of the U. S., and Population Estimates of Georgia Counties.

Columbus during the recession of late 1957 and 1958. As a result, the Columbus labor market was reclassified by the U. S. Department of Labor from an area of substantial labor surplus to an area of moderate labor surplus. Despite this favorable development, unemployment continued relatively high through the end of 1958 and showed a seasonal increase in January, 1959. The Georgia Department of Labor estimated that in January there were 3,480 persons unemployed in the Columbus labor market area.^{1/}

A comparison of the unemployment trend in the Columbus area with that of the Macon area points up the seriousness of the unemployment problem in Columbus. (See Chart 1.) While the general pattern of unemployment has been somewhat similar in the two areas, the percentage of unemployment to total civilian labor force has been considerably higher in the Columbus area since the third quarter of 1956. Unemployment has fluctuated more widely in Columbus, and the employment situation in the area has proven to be more adversely sensitive to economic recession. Although it is not possible to establish a definite trend over so short a time period, it is fairly obvious that the level of unemployment in Columbus is tending to increase, while the level of unemployment in the Macon area is tending to remain relatively stable if not to decrease slightly.

A number of factors contribute to the differing unemployment experiences in these two labor market areas. There is little doubt that the situations are affected by the employment status of service wives and the availability of civilian jobs at Ft. Benning in the Columbus area and by the high level of civilian employment at Warner Robins in the Macon area. It appears, however, that the most significant factor is the contrast in diversification of manufacturing employment in the two areas. These differences are illustrated in Table 2.

In January, 1959, almost 60 per cent of the employed manufacturing workers in Columbus were engaged in the manufacture of textile mill products. The only other major industry in the area--the processing of food and kindred products--provided jobs for a little more than 17 per cent of the employed manufacturing labor force. While the textile industry was also the major manufacturing employer in the Macon area, textile employment accounted for less than one-fourth of the total manufacturing employment in the area in January, 1959. Almost one-half of the employed manufacturing workers were engaged in the manufacture of

^{1/} Columbus Area Labor Market Trends, Employment Security Agency, Georgia Department of Labor, January, 1959.

CHART I
 PERCENTAGE OF UNEMPLOYMENT TO TOTAL CIVILIAN
 LABOR FORCE - COLUMBUS AND MACON
 LABOR MARKET AREAS

PER CENT

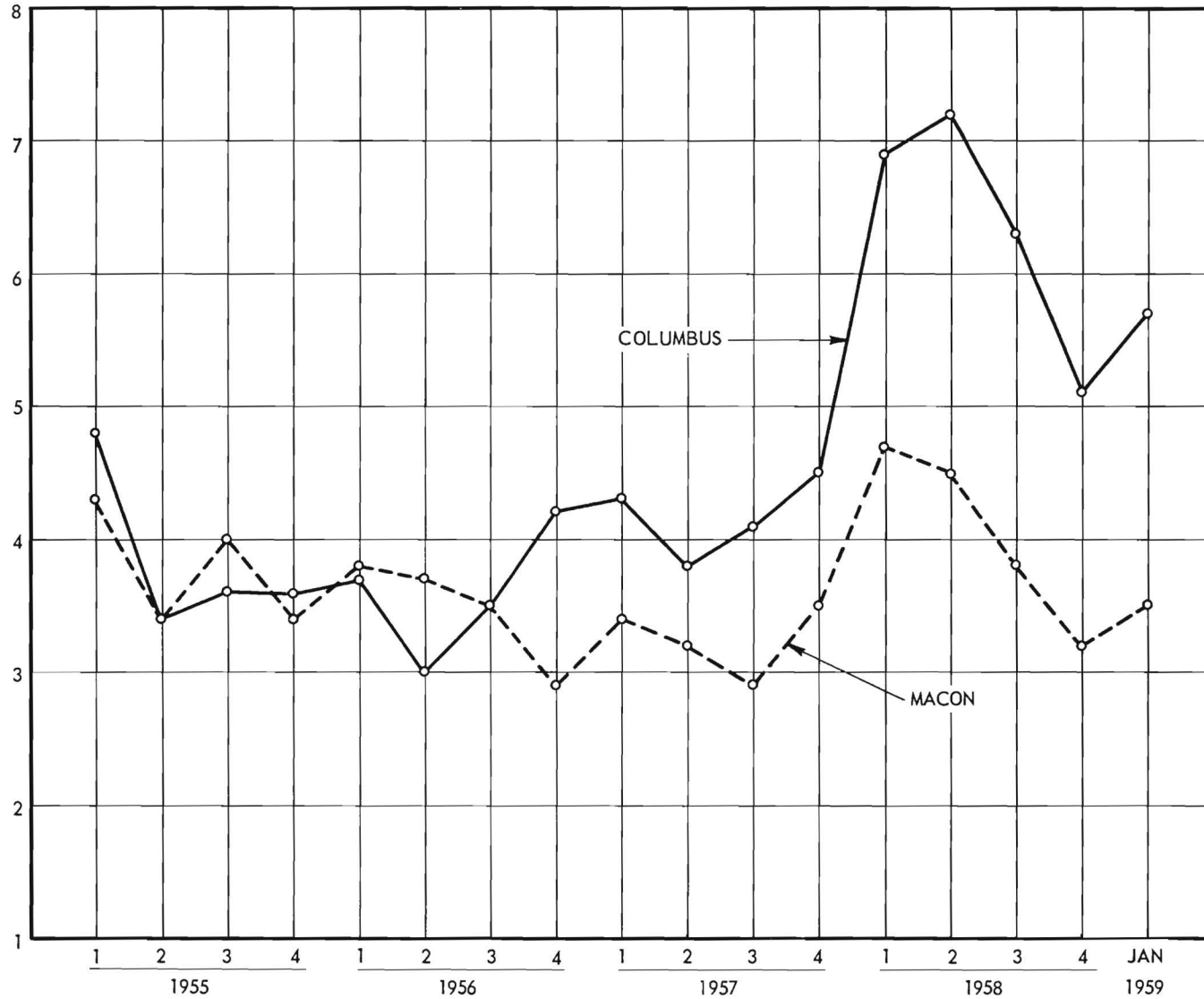


Table 2

DIVERSIFICATION OF MANUFACTURING EMPLOYMENT

Columbus and Macon Labor Market Areas

(January, 1959)

<u>Industry</u>	<u>Per Cent of Total Manu- facturing Employment</u>	
	<u>Columbus</u>	<u>Macon</u>
Textile mill products	59.3	23.5
Food and kindred products	17.1	18.3
Metals and machinery	7.6	2.0
Lumber and wood products	4.0	13.5
Other manufacturing	3.4 ^{1/}	11.1 ^{2/}
Apparel and other finished textile products	3.1	5.4
Printing, publishing and allied industries	3.1	-
Stone, clay and glass products	2.4	9.2
Paper and allied products	-	15.0
Chemicals and allied products	-	2.0

^{1/} Includes furniture and fixtures, transportation equipment, paper and allied products, chemicals, and miscellaneous manufacturing.

^{2/} Includes furniture and fixtures, primary and fabricated metals, transportation equipment, electrical machinery, printing and publishing, products of petroleum and rubber, leather and leather products, and miscellaneous manufacturing.

Source: Computed from data in Labor Market Trends (Columbus Area and Macon Area), Employment Security Agency, Georgia Department of Labor, January, 1959.

food and kindred products, paper and allied products, and lumber and wood products. Only slightly more than 70 per cent of the total manufacturing employment in the Macon area was spread among four major industries, while more than three-quarters of the employed manufacturing workers in the Columbus area were dependent upon the employment demands of only two industries. Even the minor industries in the Macon area were more diversified than were those in the Columbus labor market area.

The erratic unemployment history of the Columbus area is one of the unfavorable results of the lack of manufacturing diversification in the area. Manufacturing unemployment tends to fluctuate almost directly with the employment demands of the dominant industry, since the number and size of other manufacturing employers are not sufficiently large to provide a counterbalancing influence on total manufacturing employment. The fact that the dominant industry in the Columbus area is declining in importance underscores the urgent need for diversification if the level of manufacturing unemployment in the area is to be reduced.

Manufacturing as a source of employment is decreasing in relative importance in Muscogee County, as is demonstrated in Table 3. These data cover only insured employment in the county and are not directly comparable with labor market area data referred to previously. The coverage is broad enough, however, to indicate some general trends in employment sources. Employment in all classifications other than manufacturing and construction has grown slowly but steadily since 1949. Construction employment has fluctuated quite normally with the start-ups and completions of major construction projects. At least part of the decline in manufacturing employment can be attributed to the decreasing employment demand in the dominant textile industry, although the general pattern of decline in the relation of manufacturing employment to total employment is not unlike that of other comparable areas in Georgia.

Perhaps the most significant change in the relative importance of employment sources in Muscogee County has been the steady growth of jobs in wholesale and retail trade. It is not the purpose of this analysis of manpower resources, however, to evaluate the merits of Columbus' future as a trade center as opposed to a manufacturing center, other than to make the point that manpower should be trained in the direction in which the area is likely to move. Regardless of trends in employment sources, two facts regarding the overall employment situation remain constant: (1) Employment opportunities must expand to take care of

Table 3

TRENDS IN TYPES OF INSURED EMPLOYMENT
MUSCOGEE COUNTY
(1949-1958)

<u>Employment Source</u>	<u>Per Cent of Total Insured Employment</u>									
	<u>1949</u>	<u>1950</u>	<u>1951</u>	<u>1952</u>	<u>1953</u>	<u>1954</u>	<u>1955</u>	<u>1956</u>	<u>1957</u>	<u>1958</u>
Manufacturing	57	55	54	53	53	54	52	48	47	48
Wholesale and Retail Trade	22	21	22	22	22	24	24	25	25	25
Construction	10	12	12	12	12	9	11	10	11	10
Service and Other Industries	6	5	5	6	6	6	6	9	9	8
Transportation, Communications and Public Utilities	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	6
Finance, Insurance and Real Estate	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3

Source: Computed from data in Employment and Wages Insured by the Georgia Employment Security Law, Employment Security Agency, Georgia Department of Labor, 1949-1958.

the increasing supply of young workers; and (2) the Columbus area will benefit from diversified manufacturing even if the relative importance of manufacturing as an employment source continues to decline.

Wage Rates

A consideration of wage rates in the Columbus area confirms the desirability of manufacturing diversification and adds the qualification that, for the best interests of the community, diversification should be in the direction of higher paying industries.

The influence of the low-paying textile industry as the major employer in the Columbus area is reflected in the average wage rates in the community. As is shown in Table 4, in the second quarter of 1958 the average monthly wage rate of employees in insured manufacturing jobs in Muscogee County was lower than in other counties of comparable size and in the state as a whole. The same was true of the average monthly wage rate of employees in wholesale and retail trade and of all employees in covered nonagricultural jobs in Muscogee County. The average monthly wage rate in each classification of nonagricultural employment was lower in Muscogee County than the corresponding state average.

The wage level of the major employing industry in each of the counties compared in Table 4 directly affected the overall wage level of the county. Muscogee County, with approximately 60 per cent of its manufacturing employment concentrated in textiles, had an overall average monthly wage rate of \$256; Richmond County (Augusta), with 40 per cent of manufacturing employment in textiles, averaged \$261 per month; and Bibb County (Macon), with only 25 per cent of manufacturing employment in textiles, averaged \$268 per month. In Chatham County (Savannah), where about 40 per cent of the insured manufacturing jobholders were employed in the high-paying paper industry, the overall average monthly wage rate was \$309--considerably higher than the state average of \$285.

Low wage rates in the Columbus area are no doubt attractive to many industrial prospects who give primary consideration to labor costs in making location decisions. In this sense, the wage structure in Columbus may be considered distinctly advantageous to the industrial development potentials of the community. As far as the overall economic development of the area is concerned, however, the validity of this apparent advantage is challenged by the fact that low-paying industries tend to breed and attract other low-paying

Table 4

AVERAGE MONTHLY WAGE RATES OF EMPLOYEES INSURED
BY GEORGIA EMPLOYMENT SECURITY LAW

(Second Quarter, 1958)

<u>Wage Source</u>	<u>Bibb (Macon)</u>	<u>Chatham (Savannah)</u>	<u>Muscogee (Columbus)</u>	<u>Richmond (Augusta)</u>	<u>Georgia</u>
Construction	\$280	\$354	\$291	\$288	\$304
Manufacturing	282	371	256	266	279
Major industry: ^{1/}					
Textiles	220 (25%)		229 (60%)	234 (40%)	239 (30%)
Paper		413 (40%)			
Transportation, communica- tions & public utilities	378	330	344	325	373
Wholesale & retail trade	240	245	232	243	274
Finance, insurance and real estate	340	307	325	329	339
Service	180	174	201	196	219
Other industries	210	312	-	262	222
Total nonagricultural	268	308	256	261	285

^{1/} Average monthly wage rate and approximate percentage of manufacturing employment of major employing industry in the area.

Source: Computed from Employment and Wages Insured by the Georgia Employment Security Law, Georgia Department of Labor, Employment Security Agency, Second Quarter, 1958.

industries. Certainly established employers in a low-wage-rate area are inclined to oppose the entrance of higher paying industries which will compete with them for the available labor supply.

While the attraction of other low-paying employers to the Columbus area would contribute to the solution of the immediate unemployment problem, this development would create more long-range economic problems than it would solve. A perpetuation of abnormally low wage rates would deprive the community of the economic benefits which accompany an increasing per capita income--better economic balance, increased purchasing power, higher standard of living, and improved educational facilities and other community services made possible by a higher tax base. From the standpoint of the proper utilization of manpower resources, the most serious consequence of the continuation of a relatively low community wage level would be the loss of the best educated and best trained young people to other more attractive communities. This possibility is examined in more detail in the later discussion of the quality and composition of the labor supply in the Columbus area.

Available Labor Supply--Quantity

One of Columbus' most attractive industrial development assets is the abundance of labor available in the area. With no competing large cities within an 80-mile radius, Columbus has had no difficulty in attracting what now amounts to an oversupply of labor. In-migration has increased considerably during the past decade, even without the benefit of the usual attraction of high-paying job opportunities.

Employers in the Columbus area can draw on the labor supply available from an estimated population of more than 360,000 within commuting distance of the city. (See Table 5.) In a recent study, it was found that the Columbus commuting area encompassed 10 counties in Georgia and Alabama from which 50 or more workers commuted to and from Columbus each day.^{1/} This study also revealed that Columbus led all other major cities in Georgia in the percentage of workers living outside their county of work. It is reasonable to assume that this large commuting area would be extended even more if the wage level in Columbus were increased.

^{1/} Analysis of Intercounty Commuting of Workers in Georgia, John L. Fulmer, Industrial Development Branch, Engineering Experiment Station, Georgia Institute of Technology, August, 1958.

Table 5

POPULATION IN COLUMBUS COMMUTING AREA^{1/}

<u>County</u>	<u>Principal Cities</u>	<u>Distance from Columbus</u>	<u>County Population</u> ^{2/}
Muscogee	Columbus	--	175,281
Troup	LaGrange	42	50,340
	West Point	37	
Lee (Alabama)	Opelika	28	45,073
Russell (Alabama)	Phenix City	1	40,364
	Seale	17	
Chattahoochee	Cusseta	15	10,694
Harris	Hamilton	21	10,269
	Pine Mountain	30	
	Waverly Hall	21	
Taylor	Butler	46	8,365
Stewart	Lumpkin	37	7,975
	Richland	35	
Talbot	Talbotton	36	6,723
	Woodland	36	
	Geneva	27	
	Junction City	33	
Marion	Buena Vista	30	5,645
Total Population			360,729

^{1/} Counties from which more than 50 workers currently commute into Columbus daily. (See Analysis of Intercounty Commuting of Workers in Georgia, John L. Fulmer, Industrial Development Branch, Engineering Experiment Station, Georgia Institute of Technology, August, 1958.)

^{2/} Population figures for Georgia counties are for 1957 (estimated) from Population Estimates of Georgia Counties, John L. Fulmer, Industrial Development Branch, Engineering Experiment Station, Georgia Institute of Technology, December, 1957. Population figures for Alabama counties are for 1950 from U. S. Census data.

The available nonagricultural labor supply in the Columbus area continues to grow with the entrance of surplus and marginal farm workers into the labor force. The Georgia Department of Labor estimates that, as a result of increased farm mechanization and government agricultural policy, farm labor in the Columbus farm area (Chattahoochee, Harris, Marion, Muscogee, Quitman, Stewart, Talbot and Taylor counties) has dropped from 11,290 in 1940 to approximately 4,000 in 1957.^{1/} Indications are that this decline will continue at an accelerated rate.

Young people entering the labor force from schools provide a continuing and increasing boost to the available labor supply in the Columbus area. During 1958, graduates from Muscogee County high schools totaled 986. Approximately 40 per cent of these young people entered college, leaving a potential new labor supply of about 600. Approximately 500 students dropped out of Muscogee County high schools between Grade 8 and Grade 12 during the 1955-56 school year, according to a recent school study.^{2/} It is assumed that most of these drop-outs sought employment in the Columbus area. The labor force is further increased by the entry of graduates and drop-outs from other high schools in surrounding counties in Georgia and Alabama.

This source of labor force entrants will continue to increase in importance as the unusually large number of young people in the Columbus area complete school. It is estimated that approximately 1,150 students will be graduated from Muscogee County high schools in 1959--an increase of about 12 per cent over 1958. This increase should continue at an accelerated rate over the next decade. Implications of this trend have been pointed out before but should be reemphasized. A continuing large supply of high school graduates is a definite asset to a community interested in industrial development--but this asset can quickly become a liability if employment opportunities fail to keep pace with the increasing supply.

Another source of labor supply is the large group of housewives and farm wives in the area who would be willing to work in certain types of occupations. The Columbus office of the Georgia State Employment Service estimates that the labor force in the Columbus labor market area could be increased by some 3,000

^{1/} Farm Labor in Georgia, Georgia Department of Labor, Employment Security Agency, October, 1958.

^{2/} Public Schools of Muscogee County Georgia, George Peabody College for Teachers, Nashville, Tennessee, 1957.

to 5,000 female workers if suitable jobs were available. It is possible that this estimate is slightly high in view of the large number of women already employed in the area.

Regardless of the exact number of additional female workers available, it probably would not be wise to attempt to exploit this source of labor supply in planning the expansion and diversification of industry in the area. Employment of women in the Columbus area is already abnormally high. In the fall of 1958, the ratio of women employed to total employment in non-agricultural wage and salary jobs was considerably higher in the Columbus labor market area than in any other major labor market area in Georgia and in the state as a whole. The following data, compiled from Georgia Department of Labor figures, demonstrate this point:

<u>Labor Market Area</u>	<u>Female Employment (Per Cent of Total Non- agricultural Employment)</u>
Columbus	42.0
Augusta	35.9
Georgia	34.5
Atlanta	32.8
Macon	31.0
Savannah	30.1

Employment of a considerable number of service wives whose husbands are not included in the civilian employment figures only partially accounts for Columbus' unusually high female employment ratio. The most significant factor is the concentration in the area of industries that traditionally employ a relatively high percentage of female workers. Textiles, the largest manufacturing industry in the Columbus area, employs almost as many women as men. A third of the employees engaged in the processing of food and kindred products are women. More than half of the sizable government employment in the area is female, and women comprise approximately 65 per cent of the total employment in the growing area of service trades.

The imbalance of female employment in Columbus deserves attention in considering the economic development of the area. Of prime importance is the fact that female-employing industries are traditionally low-paying industries and therefore should not receive serious consideration as major developmental prospects. In addition, an increase in the relative number of women employed would contribute to the general instability of the local work force. Labor

turnover and absenteeism are historically more prevalent among female employees, and family mobility is generally determined by the employment status of the male rather than the female in the family. Rather than seeking to increase the demand for female employment to meet the present supply of female labor, the Columbus area would benefit more by attempting to provide higher paying employment opportunities for men. This would not only reduce the female labor supply by encouraging the withdrawal from the labor force of wives who no longer needed to work to supplement their husbands' income, but would also be instrumental in bringing about a better balance of male and female employment in the area.

Available Labor Supply--Quality and Composition

Although the quality and composition of the available labor supply in the Columbus area are adequate for present needs, the skills and technical experience that would be required by most growth industries are in short supply. This situation is not unlike that in many other areas in the South. In general, the type of industry that has grown up in the area has not demanded a large supply of highly skilled workers and technicians. As a result, workers with these qualifications have not been developed in nor attracted to the area.

An examination of the most immediately available labor supply--those who are actively seeking employment--points up the fact that quantity alone does not make a labor market favorable. Of the more than 3,700 active applications on file in the Columbus office of the Georgia State Employment Service in October, 1958, almost three-fourths were from applicants with less than high school education. (See Table 6.) While formal education and the ability to develop skill are not necessarily synonymous, the trend in employment practice is toward a minimum hiring qualification of high school graduation even for semi-skilled and some unskilled jobs. Justified or not, many employers judge the quality of a labor supply by the educational level of the workers available for employment. Assuming that an employer were seeking white male applicants with at least high school education, only 9 per cent or 333 of the 3,741 active applicants would be eligible for employment consideration, and less than one-third of these would be classified as skilled or semi-skilled. The qualified labor supply would be reduced even more if an age limit were added to this assumption. As is indicated in Table 6, approximately two-thirds of the total number of applicants were over 25 years of age, and employers

Table 6

ANALYSIS OF ACTIVE APPLICATIONS ON FILE IN GEORGIA STATE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE OFFICE
COLUMBUS, GEORGIA
(October, 1958)

<u>CLASSIFICATION</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>RACE</u>		<u>SEX</u>		<u>AGE</u>		<u>EDUCATION</u>			
		White %	Non- White %	Male %	Female %	Under 25 %	Over 25 %	Less Than High School %	High School %	High School Plus %	College %
Professional and Managerial	86	93	7	71	29	27	73	21	40	15	24
Clerical and Sales	829	98	2	21	79	51	49	34	54	10	2
Service	344	59	41	42	58	32	68	83	15	2	0
Agricultural	8	88	12	100	0	38	62	100	0	0	0
Skilled	483	86	14	92	8	11	89	88	10	2	0
Semi-skilled	885	81	19	53	47	28	72	87	12	1	0
Unskilled	809	46	54	71	29	26	74	93	6	1	0
All Entry Codes	297	97	3	40	60	66	34	59	35	4	2
TOTAL	3,741	78	22	53	47	34	66	73	22	4	1

generally prefer younger workers if they must be trained by the company.

Obviously, employment office registrants are not the only source of labor supply in the area. Neither is this source typical of the overall quality of the labor force, since most of the best qualified workers are employed and are not registered with the employment office. The staffing experiences of new employers in the Columbus area have demonstrated these points. A new plant recently attracted approximately 5,000 applicants for about 300 openings without advertising. Because of the large number of applicants, the company could be highly selective and the employees chosen proved to be very satisfactory. Since total unemployment in the Columbus labor market area was considerably less than 5,000 at the time, it is apparent that many of these applicants were attracted from other jobs.

Most analyses of labor markets fail to acknowledge this obvious source of employees for new firms. As understandably invidious as it is to established employers, the fact remains that new industry in an area will attract employees from existing firms, particularly if the skill requirements and pay rates of newcomers are higher than the average for the community. For this reason, some employers in the Columbus area are likely to oppose the diversification and upgrading of employment opportunities in the area. The validity of this opposition must be weighed against the fact that the overall economy of the Columbus area will benefit significantly if employees are provided with the opportunity to develop and utilize their highest skills and to receive commensurately higher wages and salaries.

The quality and composition of the labor force in Columbus is somewhat distorted by the fact that a number of workers are presently employed in positions which are below their maximum skill levels. While specific data on underemployment are not available, the manager of the Columbus office of the Georgia State Employment Service office is convinced that an unusually large number of workers are in this category. With the demand for skills limited by the lack of diversification in the area, many workers apparently have been willing to accept jobs which do not demand their highest skills rather than move their families to other areas in search of more desirable employment. The development of upgraded employment opportunities in the Columbus area not only would benefit these underemployed workers individually, but also would contribute to the general economic well-being of the community by making possible a more effective utilization of manpower resources.

In considering the character of the available labor supply in the Columbus labor market area, the encouraging feature is not the quality of the current work force but the potential that exists for the development of a well educated and vocationally trained work population. The opening of the new Columbus Junior College adds a much needed unit to the already impressive list of educational and training facilities in the community. Further expansion of these facilities was assured by the recent approval of a new \$550,000 area vocational-technical school.

The adult education program sponsored by the Vocational Education Department of the Muscogee County School District, is the most comprehensive of the present vocational training efforts. This program offers a variety of courses relating to general continuation education, trade and industrial education, apprenticeship training, vocational office training, distributive education, homemaking, textile training, public service training, and special training which is not necessarily vocationally oriented. The veterans training program offers trade preparatory courses in machine shop, welding, electricity, radio, and television for white veterans, and masonry, tailoring, and radio for non-white veterans. White high school students have the opportunity of studying two-year trade preparatory courses in machine shop, metal shop, auto shop, wood shop, electrical shop, radio, television, and electronics. Two-year trade preparatory courses in auto shop, cabinet making, and masonry are available to non-white high school students. Local public schools also provide special courses in industrial training, adapted to individual plant requirements when desired.

These educational and training facilities provide excellent tools for improving the quality of manpower resources in the area. Before these tools can be used most effectively, however, a plan must be established for their use. This plan should be based on a careful consideration of the types of employment opportunities that are best suited for and most likely to be attracted to the area. Educational and training programs should then be oriented toward the needs of these future employers. The present program obviously is geared to the present economy of the area--approximately 70 per cent of those enrolled in the adult education program in 1958 were in textile training classes. While present needs should not be ignored, more and more emphasis should be placed on preparing the labor force for the anticipated growth and diversification of employment opportunities in the area.

The new Columbus Junior College could make a particularly valuable contribution to the quality of the future labor supply in the community. The report of the school survey conducted by the George Peabody College for Teachers points out that one of the four major purposes of the junior college should be "the provision of 'terminal education' consisting of both general education and vocational education of a semi-professional or sub-technical nature, including supervised work experiences--all related to occupational opportunities found in the county and surrounding area."^{1/} If this objective is accomplished and if courses are related to present and future occupational opportunities, manpower resources in the area are certain to be improved appreciably.

Other patterns of manpower development are also likely to be changed by the influence of the new junior college. Responses to a special questionnaire submitted to Muscogee County high school seniors by the Peabody College survey team indicate that a junior college in the community would accelerate the growing trend toward post-high-school education. In 1958, only 21 per cent of the graduates of the largest high school in the county (Jordan Vocational High School) entered college. Of 224 seniors surveyed in this school, 79 per cent indicated that if a junior college were located in Columbus they would be more likely to attend college; 85 per cent stated that if they went to college they would probably attend the junior college in Columbus; and 58 per cent indicated that if they attended the junior college they would be interested in vocational courses.^{2/}

These results must be discounted somewhat for overstatement, of course, but they are conclusive enough to suggest some significant possibilities. If a greater proportion of high school graduates attend college, more time will be available for the community to develop expanded and diversified employment opportunities before the unusually large group of young people who are now in high school enter the labor market. If the young people of the area attend college in Columbus, they are more likely to remain in Columbus after graduation--provided, of course, that suitable employment opportunities are available locally. If they specialize in vocational courses and if these courses are properly oriented, they will be better prepared to fill the manpower needs of local employers.

^{1/} Public Schools of Muscogee County Georgia, op. cit., p. 137.

^{2/} Ibid., pp. 134 and 139.

The quality of manpower resources in the Columbus area will continue to improve even if no special effort is made to exploit the potentials of the present educational and training facilities. With proper use and direction, these facilities are capable of producing one of the best qualified work forces in the state. As educational and skill levels increase, however, individuals will become more and more reluctant to accept low-paying positions which fail to challenge their capabilities. Unless the development of more diversified and better paying job opportunities keeps pace with the inevitable rise in worker qualifications, Columbus will soon find itself in the unfortunate position of training many of its best young people for employment in other more attractive labor market areas.

Conclusions

Throughout this report a number of conclusions have been drawn and recommendations have been made regarding the proper utilization of manpower resources in the Columbus area. All of these conclusions and recommendations have been related to the need for the simultaneous preparation of the labor supply and development of the labor demand so that the quantity and quality of the two will eventually coincide. The requirements for accomplishing this objective can be reduced to two principal courses of action:

1. Employment opportunities in the Columbus area must be expanded, diversified and upgraded. Expansion of job opportunities is imperative if the community expects to absorb the increasing supply of young workers without facing a serious unemployment and out-migration problem. The area's current dependence on a dominant industry that is declining in importance points up the necessity for diversification to stabilize the present erratic unemployment situation and to insure against economic decline and stagnation. Employment opportunities must be upgraded to assure the community of the economic benefits that accompany an increasing per capita income, to make possible the maximum utilization of present skills and abilities, and to hold in the area the better qualified young people who have been educated and trained in and by the community.

2. The educational and training facilities in the Columbus area must be oriented toward the needs of these expanded, diversified and upgraded employment opportunities. Columbus has the means for developing an exceptionally well educated and vocationally trained work population. The value of this asset,

however, depends upon its use. The types of employers that are likely to be drawn to the area must be determined, and the needs of these employers must be anticipated. Educational and training programs must then be directed toward the development of manpower resources that are peculiarly fitted to supply the needs of a growing industrial area.